

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, or claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claim 1 (Original) A method of welding a tubular member having a thin portion in its circumference and having a circumferential outer edge to a member over the entire circumference of said tubular member, characterized in that welding is started at a point angularly spaced from said thin portion such that welding energy applied to said tubular member at said point will cancel welding energy which is applied to said thin portion and tends to deform said thin portion and thus said tubular member.

Claim 2 (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said tubular member has a ring-shaped cross-section, wherein the welding energy applied to said thin portion of said tubular member tends to deform said tubular member into an oval shape having a minor axis that passes said thin portion, and the welding energy applied to said point of said tubular member tends to deform said tubular member into an oval shape having a minor axis that passes said point.

Claim 3 (Original) The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said point is angularly spaced from said thin portion by about 90 degrees.

Claim 4 (Original) The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said tubular member has two thin portions which have the same thickness and wherein welding is started at a point angularly spaced about 90 degrees from the midpoint between said two thin portions.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended) An assembly comprising said tubular member and said member that are welded together by the welding method as claimed in ~~any of claims 1-4~~ claim 1.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended) A method of welding a casing of a gear pump comprising an inner rotor, an outer rotor, a casing covering a radially outer periphery of said outer rotor, and side cylinders covering both sides of said inner and outer rotors, wherein said outer casing is welded to the circumferential edges of said side cylinders by the welding method as claimed in ~~any of claims 1-4~~ claim 1.

Claim 7 (Original) A gear pump assembly wherein said casing is welded to said side cylinders by the welding method as claimed in claim 6, and said casing is formed with a thin portion which is a cutout for receiving a slide seal pressed against said outer rotor.

Claim 8 (New) An assembly comprising said tubular member and said member that are welded together by the welding method as claimed in claim 2.

Claim 9 (New) An assembly comprising said tubular member and said member that are welded together by the welding method as claimed in claim 3.

Claim 10 (New) An assembly comprising said tubular member and said member that are welded together by the welding method as claimed in claim 4.

Claim 11 (New) A method of welding a casing of a gear pump comprising an inner rotor, an outer rotor, a casing covering a radially outer periphery of said outer rotor, and side cylinders covering both sides of said inner and outer rotors, wherein said outer casing is welded to the circumferential edges of said side cylinders by the welding method as claimed in claim 2.

Claim 12 (New) A method of welding a casing of a gear pump comprising an inner rotor, an outer rotor, a casing covering a radially outer periphery of said outer rotor, and side cylinders covering both sides of said inner and outer rotors, wherein said outer casing is welded to the circumferential edges of said side cylinders by the welding method as claimed in claim 3.

Claim 13 (New) A method of welding a casing of a gear pump comprising an inner rotor, an outer rotor, a casing covering a radially outer periphery of said outer rotor, and side cylinders covering both sides of said inner and outer rotors, wherein said outer

casing is welded to the circumferential edges of said side cylinders by the welding method  
as claimed in claim 4.